

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5325

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 2944

CINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, UY, UR

SUBJ: HARDER LINE TOWARDS COMMUNISTS; SOVIET AMBASSADOR ADMONISHED

REF: (A) MVD 2896; (B) MVD 2943

SUMMARY: OVER THE PAST 48 HOURS THE GOU HAS DEALT WITH WHAT IT CONSIDERS COMMUNIST INTRUSION IN URUGUAY'S DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS. FIRST, COMMUNIST MEDIA OUTLETS WERE BROUGHT BEFORE MILITARY COURTS TO FACE CHARGES OF VIOLATING CENSORSHIP DECREES AND THEN THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR WAS CALLED IN FOR A RATHER PUBLIC DRESSING DOWN FOR HAVING PUT URUGUAY IN A POTENTIALLY EMBARRASSING POSITION WITH RESPECT TO THE NEW CHILEAN GOVERNMENT. (REFTEL B) ALTHOUGH MORE DRASTIC MEASURES, SUCH AS A BREAK IN RELATIONS AND THE OUTLAWING OF THE URUGUAYAN COMMUNIST PARTY APPARENTLY WERE CONSIDERED, COOLER HEADS PREVAILED. HOWEVER, THIS IS NOT LIKELY TO BE THE LAST WORD IN THE GOU'S HARDENING LINE TOWARDS THE COMMUNISTS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE GOU MOVED SWIFTLY OVER THE PAST 48 HOURS TO DEAL WITH WHAT
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IT CONSIDERS COMMUNIST INTRUSION IN URUGUAYAN DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN

AFFAIRS.

2. ON SEPTEMBER 19, PUBLICATION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY (PCU) DAILY "EL POPULAR," WAS SUSPENDED FOR 20 DAYS AND AS WERE THE LEFTIST PDC) "AHORA" (10 EDITIONS) AND RADIO NACIONAL (20 DAYS). ALTHOUGH TEMPORARY SUSPENSIONS HAVE OCCURED IN THE PAST, A NEW FEATURE WAS ADDED ON SEPTEMBER 26 WHEN THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ANNOUNCED THAT THE CASE OF "EL POPULAR" AND RADIO NACIONAL WOULD BE TURNED OVER TO THE MILITARY COURTS WHERE PERMANENT CLOSURES OF BOTH PLUS IIPRISONMENT OF THOSE RESPONSIBLE WOULD BE SOUGHT. THEY WILL BE CHARGED WITH VIOLATING CENSORSHIP DECREES, PRIMARILY FOR HAVING ATTACKED THE GOVERNMENT OF CHILE.

3. A DAY LATER, SEPTEMBER 27, THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL ISSUED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT: "...THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL CONSIDERED , AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE SITUATION RESULTING FROM RECENT POLITICAL EVENTS IN SOUTH AMERICAN COUNTRIES.

"SUCH EVENTS ARE DEMONSTRATIVE OF THE AGGRESSIVE ACTION WHICH INTERNATIONAL MARXISM TAKES IN OUR REPUBLICS, AFFECTING THEIR SOVERIGNTY AND SECURITY IN MANIFEST VIOLATION OF FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE CHARTERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES, SUCH AS FREE DETERMINATION OF PEOPLES, THE MAINTENANCE AND PROMOTION OF FRIENDLY RELATIONS AND NON-INTERVENTION IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF STATES.

"GIVEN THIS, THE COUNCIL HAS EXPRESSED ITS CONSENSUS WITH RESPECT TO THE ADOPTION OF INTERNAL MEASURES TO SUPPORT WITH DECISIVENESS A JURIDICAL DOCTRINE WHICH DEFENDS THE SUPREME IDEALS AND INTERESTS OF THE NATION BEFORE THE ILLEGAL ATTITUDES WHICH CONSPIRE AGAINST ITS SYSTEMS AND DEVELOPMENT.

"IN LIKE MANNER, THE ACTIVATION OF INTERNATIONAL MECHANISMS OF LEGITIMATE INDEPENDENT AND COLLECTIVE DEFENSE TO REJECT AND AVOID MARXIST INTRUSION IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE AMERICAN STATES WAS STUDIED."

4. AS DETAILED IN REFTEL B, THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR WAS THEN CALLED IN CONFIDENTIAL

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AND DRESSED DOWN.

5. WE BELIEVE THERE ARE A NUMBER OF REASONS FOR THE GOU'S ACTION. FIRST, IT PRESSURES THE SOVIETS TO WITHDRAW SUPPORT FOR LOCAL COMMUNIST

ACTIVITIES IN POLITICS (PCU), THE INFORMATION FIELD (INCLUDING EL POPULAR) AND AMONG LABOR AND STUDENT GROUPS. SECOND, MILITARY LEADERS HAVE TOLD US PRIVATELY OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS THAT THE

WHOLE REGION (PARTICULARLY ARGENTINA, BRAZIL, CHILE AND PARAGUAY) HAVE MOVED OR ARE MOVING IN THE SAME DIRECTION AND THE URUGUAYAN MILITARY AGREES WITH THE TREND. URUGUAY DOES NOT WANT TO APPEAR TO BE THE ONLY HAVEN FOR COMMUNIST ACTIVITY IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD. THIRD, HARD-LINE MILITARY LEADERS, SUCH AS FIRST DIVISION COMMANDER GENERAL CRISTI, ARE ANTI-COMMUNIST FANATICS AND ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE PUSHED FOR MORE DRASTIC MEASURES INCLUDING A BREAK IN RELATIONS.

6. MANY INFORMED PERSONS WERE EXPECTING THAT THE PCU MIGHT BE OUTLAWED. GENERAL FORTEZA'S SPEECH OF SEPT 23 (SEE REFTTEL A) TOOK A HARD LINE AND POINTED TOWARDS SUCH A STEP. ALSO, THE MANNER IN WHICH THE GOVERNMENT DEALT WITH THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR, ANNOUNCING BEFOREHAND TO THE MEDIA THAT HE WAS BEING CALLED IN AT 1130 ON SEPTEMBER 28 TO BE DRESSED DOWN, SUGGESTED THAT AN EVEN STRONGER MEASURE MIGHT HAVE BEEN FORTHCOMING.

7. A SENIOR FONOFF OFFICIAL TOLD AN EMBOFF MOMENTS AGO THAT SOME OF THE MILITARY HAD URGED A SUSPENSION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND OUTLAWING OF THE PCU. COOLER HEADS PREVAILED, PROBABLY FOREIGN OFFICE PEOPLE WHO WANTED NO RUPTURE AND INTERIOR MINISTER BOLENTINI WHO IS AMONG THE MORE DYNAMIC PRINCIPALS WHO PREFER TO HAVE THE PCU OPERATING OVERTLY.

8. THE SAME FONOFF SOURCE ASSURED US THAT THE COSENA RELEASE DID NOT IMPLY ANYTHING LIKE RECOURSE TO THE RIO TREATY. RATHER IT WAS DESIGNED TO LAY A JURIDICAL FOUNDATION FOR THE CLAIM THAT IF URUGUAY PERMITTED, IN ITS TERRITORY, ATTACKS ON A FRIENDLY GOVERNMENT (CHILE), THAT GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE GROUNDS TO TAKE REPRISALS.

9. THE GOU OBVIOUSLY HAS TAKEN A HARDER LINE WITH RESPECT TO THE COMMUNISTS. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THIS IS TO BE THE LAST ACT OF

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